

Giving Europe a future – Sustainability as the guiding principle for the EU!

Declaration of the environment and development umbrella organisations DNR and VENRO and other civil society organisations on the Informal EU Summit in Bratislava

The Brexit vote has evoked fundamental questions about the future direction of the European Union. The EU is at the crossroads between deregulation and sustainability, between divided nation states and a united EU with common values. The challenges we are facing, such as climate change, global refugee and migration movements, dependency on resource imports, social inequality or the consequences of the financial and economic crisis can only be solved through common action. Today we need the EU more than ever. However, the EU needs to be a more democratic and sustainable EU which fulfils its global responsibility!

Last year, the international community has committed itself to the global Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda in New York. We are deeply convinced that these sustainability goals have to become the central guiding principle of a highly collaborative European Union. This is the way for the EU Member States to find a common vision for the future of Europe's citizens. The current agenda of most heads of states and governments and the Juncker Commission, which is directed towards economic growth and deregulation, is neither sustainable nor does it give a European added value to the EU's citizens. In order to meet the UN sustainability goals, the EU has to fundamentally reform its agricultural policy, strengthen the protection of biodiversity and bring its energy and climate targets into accordance with the targets of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Together we stand for a European Union that puts its citizens and the people from all over the world at the heart of its policies. Therefore, it is vital to cut back democratic deficits, to build up true transparency in decision-making within and between the Institutions as well as to fully implement and enforce EU legislation. Otherwise, dissatisfaction among the population and Euroscepticism will continue to exacerbate. Environmental protection is an important policy field because citizens appreciate what the EU is doing in this field. People have realized that clean air and water, intact nature as well as secure chemicals can only be guaranteed through cross-border cooperation and common minimum standards in accordance with the precautionary principle. Therefore, the European Union needs a true change towards a sustainable development within the carrying capacity of our planet.

A sound environment and a liveable society are of great importance for a sustainable and democratic Europe and have the potential to become the uniting elements for the European Union. We call on the Federal Government of Germany and the European Institutions: Strengthen the EU, turn the European vision into a vision of its citizens and a model for social justice. Create a sustainable community!

Berlin, 15 September 2016

Supporting organisations

Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA) e.V., Berlin 21 e.V., Bioland e.V., Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e. V. (BUND), Bundesverband Boden e.V., Bundesverband für Umweltberatung e.V. (BFUB), Campact e.V., Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V. (DUH), Euronatur, EUROPARC Deutschland e.V., finep - forum für internationale entwicklung + planung, Forum Ökologisch-Soziale Marktwirtschaft (FÖS), Gäa e.V. – Ökologischer Landbau, Germanwatch e.V., Landesnaturschutzverband Baden-Württemberg e.V. (LNV), Landesnaturschutzverband Schleswig-Holstein e.V. (LNV), Licht und Natur e.V., Mellifera e. V., NaturFreunde Deutschlands e.V., Naturland - Verband für ökologischen Landbau e.V., Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V. (NABU), Naturschutzgesellschaft Schutzstation Wattenmeer e.V., OroVerde – Die Tropenwaldstiftung, Pro Wildlife e.V., Schweisfurth Stiftung, UVP-Gesellschaft e.V., Verband Deutscher Naturparke e.V., Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V. (VCD), Women in Europe for a Common Future - WECF/WICF.

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